Percezioni di uguaglianza ed equità: un sondaggio contemporaneo sugli studenti Erasmus in Spagna
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Perceptions of Equality and Fairness: A contemporary survey on Erasmus students in Spain

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Abstract

Many humanitarian organisations and institutions have focussed or reducing inequality, end discrimination, promote cohesiveness and ensure that everyone enjoys their fundamental human rights regardless of race, sexual orientation, age and income. What makes it more of a massive undertaking is that there are so many different conceptions of fairness and equality around the world. There is not much information on how different people understand and assign meaning to these terms.

This paper aims at moving a step further regarding existing evidence on the public's attitudes and apply it to the understanding of fairness and equality by Erasmus students and what are the key drivers that shape the said attitudes. It also investigates the implications of their understanding towards building a more equitable society.

The key findings were that the key drivers of attitudes were demographic factors (age and political orientation). Other demographic factors, such as gender and income, were not significant.

Equality was divided two-fold: equality of process and equality of outcome. Subjects who saw inequality as a valid issue also supported equality of outcome.

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Introduction

The talk about inequality has been rife, especially in politics and economic policy. There has been a lot of worries that the gap between the poor and the rich is still growing, skilled and unskilled, young and old, and so on. Inequality not only concerns income: but also, health, family, life expectancy, politics and wealth.

Since the financial crisis of 2007–08 (Financial crisis of 2007–08., 2007), also known as the global financial crisis and the 2008 financial crisis, there was a severe worldwide economic crisis considered by many economists to have been the most severe financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, to which it is often compared (Financial crisis of 2007–08., 2007). It is in these trying times that many economists shed more light into these inequalities. Globalization and technological change continuously threaten the way of life. Some have blamed on the fall of central political parties and the rise of populist parties as to the main reason why there is a more excellent feeling of economic insecurity due to increasing inequality.

What we need to do now is introspect and ask ourselves: do we understand the concepts of inequality and unfairness? What are the different types of inequality and which ones should we focus on? What are the factors that motivate them? What policies should we put in place to tackle them?

This paper will answer the question above and a few more others. It is the most ambitious, as it involves a diverse group of subjects and cuts across many academic disciplines. It involves the use of an online survey as the main tool data collection. Purists might argue that there was an unfair advantage; however, based on the circumstances at the time of writing, this was the most feasible option. The paper aims to shed more light on inequality in living standards, wealth, health, opportunity, gender and education. The article will attempt to explore what aspects of inequality affect people, which facets of it are fair and unfair, and how these concerns relate to actual levels of inequality and the creation of inequality. It will examine the significant forces that shape inequalities.

This paper heralds some of the issues that will be covered in the future in a different setting, to get an idea of what is in store. The aim is to demonstrate the breadth of the analysis to the main hypotheses and not to provide answers.

What is Inequality, and how is it related to fairness?

It is hard to get a consensus on what inequality means to people. Recently, the inequality between the young and the old has been brought to light and moved up the political agenda. The financial crisis drew our focus on incomes of the wealthiest, and how the austerity measures were addressed to those in the middle and low-income bracket. Economists every so often focuses on disparities in disposable incomes and wealth among the poor and the rich. For others, the gender pay gap is more important.

It is essential to acknowledge that inequality is not only about how much money people have. Even in families, inequality has put much pressure in the sense that it determines the kind of environment that children can thrive. The gap between the most affluent neighbourhood s and the deprived areas in terms of life expectancy, mental health and crime rates cannot go without mention. The separation between the metropolitan cities from villages and ex-industrial powerhouses in terms of erosion of traditional industries, working population and incomes have also been witnessed in many countries in the world. Young people have a lower probability of moving upwards in terms of employment and wealth creation.

Mainstream income inequality indicators are more accessible to measure than some of the inequalities highlighted above. However, we must strive to grasp the bigger picture.

The main idea of fairness is known as our preference for equal outcomes. It means that not only are we inequality averse, but also people generally tend to dislike unequal payoffs. Investigation of this phenomena is through experimental games in behavioural economics (Fehr & Schmidt, 1999).

A considerable part of fairness study in experimental economics focusses on prices and wages. Consumers are against price increases as a result of short-term growth in demand than the rise in costs (Kahneman et al., 1986) and employers often agree to pay wages slightly above the minimum hoping that this fairness is reciprocated by an increase in employee productivity (Jolls, 2002). On the other hand, perceived unfairness, such as excessive wages to top management, is linked to reduced work morale among staff (Cornelissen et al., 2011).

One of the cornerstones of economic theory is that agents are rational and selfish, and only seek to maximise their payoff. However, many studies from different field of psychology and economics have questioned this dogma of the "rational agent" in describing human behaviour.

The main idea is that people's motives are, to an extent, fuelled by fairness and equality. It is, however, striking to understand that what passes as fair and equal depends on the metrics that we use to compare ourselves with others.

It is known that the levels of inequality all around the world is staggeringly high, and it is still on the rise. Picture this: the eight wealthiest individuals in the world own as much as half of the world's population.

This makes inequality one of the major chronic issues affecting the world today. It manifests itself in so many aspects of our lives. This calls for radical plans to reduce inequality; however, we should tread carefully. Some forms of inequality are natural to tackle and are

morally straightforward; for instance, racial prejudice. Economic inequality, on the other hand, is an uphill battle.

Surprisingly, some form of economic inequality is good. In the psychology journal *Nature Human Behaviour* encapsulated human behaviour and how it is viewed from different perspectives: psychological, biological, social biases, etcetera, and, for us to fight inequality, we have to accept that not all inequality is unacceptable, and there is good inequality and bad inequality.

Inequality aversion influences human behaviour. Paradoxically, in several lab experiments, field experiments have shown that subjects were lax about inequality than in the lab when asked about the ideal distribution of wealth.

In an influential study in the US, 5500 Americans participated in a survey about their ideal distribution of wealth, and the results are summarised in the table below. What we see is that when it comes down to choose between complete equality and high levels of inequality, the latter is chosen (Ariely & Norton, 2011)

Deep divisions

Americans think US society is much more equal than it actually is and would like it to be more so – but they don't want total equality

How unequal is society?
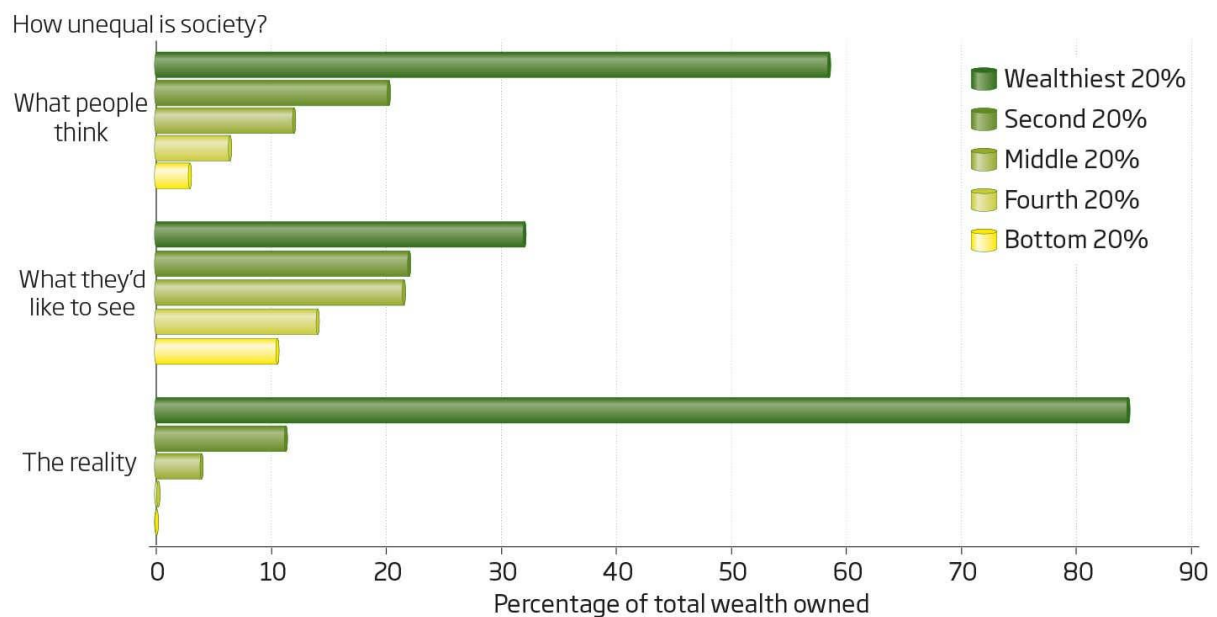
The authors concluded that even though Americans desire greater equality, they do not want it so much as to live in a completely equal society.

Economic unfairness

When one must choose between fairness and equality, people prefer fair inequality over unfair equality. This preference explains why subjects prefer equal distribution in lab experiments but unequal distribution in the real world. Some lab experiments have investigated this and found out that the aversion to unfairness is more significant than inequality aversion.

One of the reasons we prefer wealth inequality is that there is the possibility of becoming wealthier and promotes industriousness and mobility. Another motivator is that individuals who have contributed more to society should be highly rewarded. Two hundred years ago, American workers had almost the same amount of wealth, but the quality of living was not good. In the late 19th century, wealth inequality was on the rise. With this came wealthy families who invested in the country. John D. Rockefeller's first successful business venture was selling kerosene, bringing light to those impoverished households and creating new jobs. The advance in transport helped Henry Ford selling mass-produced cars.

Therefore, if we desire to attain greater fairness, it is imperative to recognise how and why the motivation for fairness increases or decreases. Several studies have revealed that it depends on the context. Interestingly, the motivation is quite high when individuals realise that they are being assessed by others who can choose whether to work together with them in the future. Similarly, regular interaction with strangers results in higher levels of ethical behaviour.

Even small environmental cues can have huge effects: in one study, participants played an economic decision-making game called either "the community game" or "the Wall Street game". Even though the actual content was identical for everyone, subjects in groups told they were playing the community game made more cooperative decisions and expected the same from other players.

Such a study on how people think about fairness has apparent implications for antagonistic social issues such as taxation and welfare. Fair inequality is desirable. What level of it should we seek?

Literature review

Introduction

This section focuses on both case studies and literature review. In some instances, they talk about the same thing in the sense that some journals or reports were based on the same study.

The table below summarises the main research question, as well as one objective for the evidence review, and puts forth how the themes and literature come together. There was insufficient literature that answered the direct questions related to this paper. However, as we will see later, some of these studies did give useful intuitions on related issues. On the other hand, the literature on the drivers of attitudes was more valuable.

Some of the surveys mentioned in this paper were more useful than others. For instance, the European Social Survey focussed on drivers of attitudes in context. The values were well presented; however, it was not very useful as a primary source of survey questions.

The most significant surveys in terms of how they contributed to the format of potential questions were Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey and British Social Survey. The latter is quite outstanding in that it has been running since 1983 and uses a multi-topic question format and makes it the best in its class. It is quite regular; the material is plentiful, and it covers multiple periods.

What is equality and fairness?

Definitions

It is imperative to visualize what the terms mean. To try and define these terms would be oversimplifying the philosophical debates that have been going on for years. This paper will not attempt to go into the said debates, but how we can interpret these terms with the aim of making a significant contribution to the main research questions. The paper by Buchardt (2006) was written to inquire on the definition of equality, regarding philosophical works and policies, persistence of social inequality and provide recommendations to the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. It begins by differentiating who equality applies to and what areas should equality be. It goes without saying that there is no debate on who equality applies to, based on several factors such as age, gender, religion and sexual orientation. The paper also discusses the strengths and shortcomings of the mainstream understanding of equality in terms of opportunity, outcome and process. This implies different meaning and interpretations, reminiscent of the mystical Pandora's box.

Main questions	Themes
What do we understand by the terms equality and fairness?	Papers on income inequality are instrumental here
What are the drivers of attitudes towards equality, fairness and equality, how are they shaped and how do they vary?	Drivers: Education Personal interests Wealth

	Prejudices Age
How does people's understanding and attitudes affect the potential for change?	This will be captured in various parts of the paper
What else is worth investigating in later stages?	Legitimizing beliefs The significance of knowledge The significance of values Life experience
What is the approach when considering the methodology?	Ways of measuring key variables

At this point, we can define equality of process as a need for equal treatment regardless of the expected outcome or the needs of the individual. Equality of outcome means everyone gets the same result irrespective of the individual needs, wants or agency. It can be said that equality of opportunity is an upgrade on equality of process and outcome in the sense that it emphasises on the chance that people have access to achieve specific results. Burchardt (2006) expounds on the meaning of equality of opportunity and focusses on three concepts that are closely related: meritocracy, capability and egalitarianism. In a meritocratic approach, the opportunity is limited to individual talents and skills, and social disadvantages is undesirable. The fact that people's skills and efforts are shaped by a defect is not considered, to begin with. The egalitarian approach speculates that opportunities should not be limited by factors that are out of one's reach, which is one of the significant shortcomings of the meritocratic approach. In his paper, Burchardt (2006) puts forth that it is always not possible to be able to identify the factors that are out of one's reach.

Amartya Sen (1980, 1985, 1993) is notably mentioned in the Capability approach, addresses the shortcomings of the meritocratic and egalitarian methods. It focuses on what we can be or do. It is regarded to be a more comprehensive and undeniably more useful approach as it factors in individual agency, values and wants; it takes account of some aspects of process equality; it accommodates variations in need, and it explicitly acknowledges how the institutional/societal context confers advantages and disadvantages and how this can accumulate over people's lives. It is important to note that the capabilities mentioned here are by the individual; a person's lack of ability is symbolic of a failing society inability to provide the means necessary rather than a shortcoming on the part of the individual. The table below provides useful insight as to how this approach can manifest itself in the world.

Capability
To be alive
To live in a safe place
To be healthy
To be knowledgeable

To live comfortably and independently

To be productive

To participate in social decision making

To express yourself

To be protected and treated fairly by law

If we now look at the meaning of fairness, there are so many similar thoughts and ideas that are intertwined as we have seen above. Based on the arguments we can define fairness to an end and as an end by itself, depending on how it is used. Fairness be a way in which equality is achieved. On top of that, fair treatment can be used as a tool to attain even more equality. In the philosophical literature, fairness and equality are always thought to have the same meaning as justice. For example, Rawls's work on liberty and equality focusses on the concept of 'Justice as Fairness' (Rawls, 2001). However, the main goal here is the public's understanding of these terms. What is even more critical is the extent to which these different conceptions of the terms have ever been empirically tested among the public.

Why fairness matters

The idea of fairness is omnipresent in many social settings, be it families, friends, at work, relationships, to mention a few. Usually, conflict arises if one does not take care of their responsibilities. For instance, one employee would feel bad if another employee of the same rank gets less work, and it is inconvenient when running a business.

Inequality is not fair. Over the past decade, it has become a problematic issue. It is blamed for almost every political and social ill that exist in the world. From the stagnation of economy, cronyism, terrorism, the inability of the poor to rise somehow blames inequality.

What we consider as fair is also to an extent dictated by the context we are currently or have been in. It also plays a pivotal role in shaping the behaviour of people in various economic sectors. For instance, a survey of Swedish manufacturing firms has shown the influence fairness, and equity norms have made direct wages unprofitable (Agell & Lundborg, 1997). Consequently, the firms had to outsource some services to cut the expense on direct wages and remain profitable. Also, the degree of tax evasion and avoidance is significantly dependent on the supposed fairness of the tax regime (Andreoni, Erard, & Feinstein, 1998). Also, the amount if support from the society in favour of regulation of private industries depends on the perception of fairness of the policies implemented by the firm (Zajac, 1995). Also, compliance in contractual obligations and the law is strongly influenced by the fairness of the justice system (Fehr, Gächter , & Kirchsteiger, 1997). A few decades before the new millennium in the USA, the deterioration of public support for welfare was found to be closely tied with the understanding of reciprocity and fairness (Bowles & Gintis, 2000). In

many cases, people will stop funding programs that help the poor if they think that the poor are reluctant to bear their share of responsibilities for the society.

What we have seen are some real cases where fairness plays a pivotal role in decision making. However, we are going to turn our spotlight on experimental studies since in real-life situations it is impossible to isolate the impact of the drivers of fairness where there are so many variables present in our day to day lives. If we assume that we are entirely sceptic, one might argue that fairness merely is non-existent, and it masquerades as pure selfish behaviour in a repeated game. Thus, we must trust experimental evidence on human decision making. Such experiments involve real decisions with monetary payoffs. The experiment is carefully controlled in the lab. The possibility of running one-shot interactions ensures long-term egocentricity is ruled out as an explanation of the results. In the next pages, it will be apparent that some risks are quite high.

As we have seen, most economic schools of thought ride with the assumption that all people are selfish and only seek to maximise their payoff. For instance, renowned economists such as Adam Smith and Paul Samuelson concluded that individuals not only care about one another but also caring about one's neighbour is good for the economy. It is, however, essential to point out that their findings did not have a significant impact compared to more popular economic schools of thought. In the last decade, many economic scholars have gathered much compelling evidence that concurs with Adam Smith and Paul Samuelson's findings. The evidence puts forth the idea that many other preferences are significant motivators, and it would not be prudent to ignore social interactions. Moreover, other theoretical papers have turned the spotlight on challenges that have baffled economists for a long time, for instance, collective bargaining, property rights allocations, non-competitive premium in wages, etcetera. These theories flagged off new methodologies of investigating the nature of preferences and how they relate to various theories on fairness.

The reason many economists are unwilling to disregard the self-interest hypothesis is that it does a fantastic job in explaining some phenomena in certain situations, for example, competitive economies with standardized goods. At the same time, however, a significant amount of business also occurs outside the boundaries of a competitive market. It would not be sensible to use self-interest models in such, and it would be misleading to do so.

At the same time, other experimental evidence suggests that individuals can be selfish even if they are aware that their actions will affect others if the cost is negligible. Likewise, individuals are willing to punish other people also if it might affect their well-being. What is quite interesting are the models based on the interactions of fair and selfish individuals in strategic contexts. According to these models, most people behave reasonably in other settings and act selfishly in strategic settings.

Another reason is that economists are unwilling to change the very fundamental idea that their experiments ride on. If everyone is selfish, simplifies everything and makes it easier to explain the changing preferences. In the past, this was acceptable because researchers did not have modern tools to explain the dynamics of choices scientifically.

Key findings from existing literature

As we had already set at the beginning of the paper, there was little evidence that could serve as a primary source of information when it came to an understanding of the concepts of fairness and equality. To address this shortcoming, several key papers were identified. There have been many surveys that featured fairness and equality as concrete terms. Some of the topics investigated include:

- Poverty
- Economic equality
- Social mobility
- Public spending
- Fair treatment
- Discrimination

The papers on economic inequality were more useful in terms of direct information with regards to drafting the survey questions that were used to measure the perceptions of inequality and fairness. It is the most documented aspect of equality in terms of volume and time it has been covered over the years. They were useful as a primary source of questionnaire material as they give a lot of phrases and keywords that can be adapted and use in the survey. Several papers identified in the evidence review based on studies of public attitudes to economic inequality and poverty were of use (Castell and Thompson, 2007; Orton and Rowlingson, 2007; Pahl, Rose, and Spencer, 2007; Fabian Society, 2005). Much of the evidence on the public's opinion came from the British Social Attitudes survey series. Orton and Rowlingson's review of literature about public attitudes to economic inequality concluded that this has the most comprehensive data on this topic, and its findings were based mainly on this source. However, there is relatively little evidence about people's understanding of any of these terms as distinct from their attitudes to them. Further, while there have been numerous studies on attitudes towards and understanding of some of the mechanisms through which income equality could be achieved, for example, the tax system (Brook, Hall and Preston, 1996; Hedges and Bromley, 2000), the benefit system (Hills, Sefton and Stewart, 2009), as well as the nature of income distributions and society's composition (Hedges, 2005; Taylor-Gooby and Hastie, 2002), none of the studies cited were set on exploring the broader issue of what would constitute equality and fairness and what the public understand by those terms. However, by exploring the various mechanisms for achieving income equality, these came close to finding out the public's support for different concepts of equality in terms of the process, outcome and opportunity terms discussed above.

The figure below presents some findings from the British Social Attitudes survey on three questions related to income inequality. These are useful to consider for two reasons:

1. Firstly, this data is drawn from the most comprehensive study in Britain of any aspect that had been carried out;
2. It highlights some of the challenges that might be encountered in an exploratory future survey branching out from just economic equality

In many years, this study has asked as many as 40 questions about this topic; the following three questions have been included in most years even when the topic hasn't been covered in detail. The first asks people to say what they think about the size of the gap between people's

incomes while the second two agree/disagree statements about the broad principles of fair wealth distribution and actions to minimise inequalities:

Thinking of income levels generally in Europe today, would you say that the gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is too large, about right, or, too small? How much do you agree or disagree that ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth?

The government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well off.
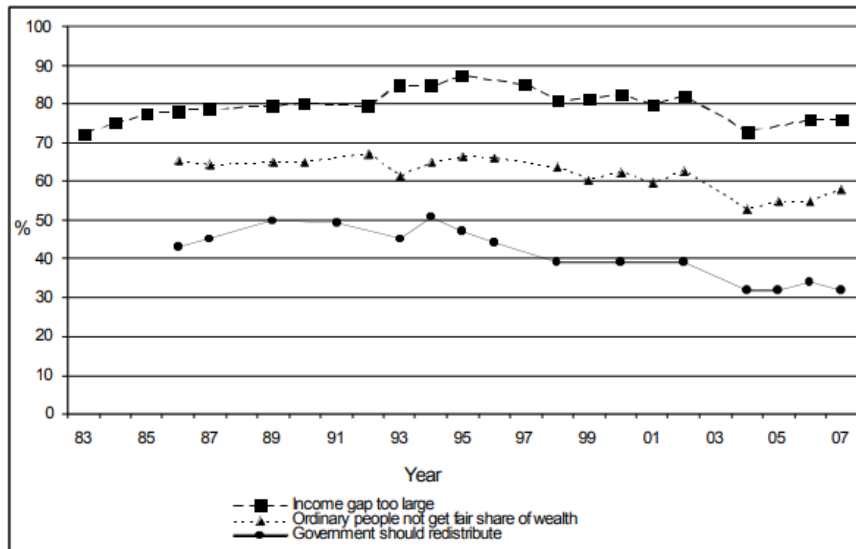
Source: British Social Attitudes survey, National Centre for Social Research.

As seen above, the most significant result is that an overwhelming majority of people think that the gap between the rich and the poor is too big. The proportion has changed over the period but is never less than 70%. On the other hand, a lower percentage (52-68%) think wealth is not shared equitably. An even smaller number agree that redistribution of income would be a suitable mechanism for addressing inequality; less than 40% in the past decade have agreed with this, and only around 30% has done so since 2006.
The review by Orton and Rowlingson (2007) of attitudes to economic inequality highlighted:

- the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of public opinion about income inequality (there is much concern about the gap between the rich and the poor, but at the same time there is little support for wealth redistribution)
- generally low levels of knowledge about the tax and benefit systems, and about income distribution
- a lack of clarity regarding what people understand by the concepts explored in surveys of income inequality and redistribution.

What does this mean for a survey about equality and fairness? The fact that studies of just one type of inequality have struggled to overcome imperfect knowledge on the part of respondents and have uncovered contradictory attitudes suggests that focusing on public understanding of these concepts could potentially help address some of these difficulties.

Getting people's opinion on their knowledge of equality in a variety of contexts should be relatively straightforward in terms of question design. However, the need to locate this firmly within concrete contexts (rather than as a broad concept) could prove challenging in terms of the number of questions required to capture the topic comprehensively.

Fairness is implicit in a lot of the questions discussed above on inequality, and in many cases, it is addressed more explicitly. The way fairness has been operationalised in surveys tends to fall broadly into two categories:

1. whether people think certain kinds of treatment of people is fair, and
2. whether they believe decisions about how to share resources or spend public money are fair.

Much of the work on attitudes toward discrimination has centred on scenarios that investigate the fair and unfair treatment of people. They are based on examples of people from groups that have traditionally experienced significant levels of discriminatory treatment. The SSA discrimination module is a notable example of this kind of approach (Bromley, Curtice and Given, 2007; Bromley and Curtice, 2003) as is Abrams and Houston's 2006 study. The SSA questionnaire included examples of unfair treatment about goods and services as well as examples of positive discrimination in which one group received more favourable treatment than others when being shortlisted for a job.

A central feature of attitude surveys is the focus on how public resources are shared among groups in society. Even though fairness by itself has rarely been the primary goal of these questions, considerations of fairness have been implied in many of the examples that were used. For instance, the BSA included questions about health care access that asked people to choose between different groups in terms of the treatment received (for example, whether younger people should have priority for specific treatments over older people). It has also looked at whether resources in the education system should be targeted at groups (such as whether grants for university students should be restricted to those from disadvantaged backgrounds or available for everyone). At the same time, the question of who should be entitled to state benefits has been a significant feature of the BSA for many years. A lot of the debates around these often revolve around questions of fairness in terms of entitlement; for instance, it is fair for people who have contributed more to receive higher benefits as a result. Although these questions were part of a more comprehensive set of questions about health, education and welfare systems, consequently not putting into consideration the concept of fairness, they could be developed further in a study that takes fairness as its starting point. The questions on income equality discussed above stemmed from extended modules of questions designed to address the issue in some detail. In contrast, these examples of questions drawing on fairness are taken from various parts of different questionnaires instead of in-depth studies of one thematic topic. Consequently, it would not be prudent to formulate concrete conclusions about attitudes on fairness based on incomparable and contrasting papers.

Key drivers of attitudes

There are several economic, social and psychological drivers of attitude used in the analysis of discrimination by Bromley and Curtice (2003). The general question was whether

concerns over an economic threat, different social background and psychological factors derived from people's identity and the perceptions they have of people who are perceived to be different from themselves had a significant influence over discriminatory attitudes. The most notable was the psychological model, but the others were significant but too. A survey on equality, diversity and prejudice by Abrams and Houston (2006) set out to investigate some critical drivers of bias, several them come from the psychological theory. The essential areas that the authors narrowed down on were categorisation, stereotypes, social identity, intergroup threat and values. One of their findings was that not so common among women, disabled people and older people and was more common in black communities, Muslims and gay men or lesbians. The argument is that the latter three groups represent more of a cultural threat. Both these sources stress the role of explanations that go beyond simple analyses of factors usually associated with attitudes such as age, education or social class and instead sketch out a much more complex picture of drivers related to identity and beliefs about the role of different groups within communities. This highlights the significant link that exists between concepts such as fairness and equality.

The review of attitudes to income inequality (Orton and Rowlingson, 2007) explored above also considered various explanations of attitudes which they classified as typifying: self-interest versus altruism, reference groups and relative deprivation, empathy and socio-cultural distance. Some of these have similarities with Abrams and Houston's (2006) work in terms of how group membership and the assigning of characteristics to supposed 'out-groups' can influence opinions. They also highlighted work that shows people's underlying beliefs about the causes of poverty or inequality are pivotal. For example, whether someone considers poor outcomes to be a consequence of bad luck or bad decisions or a lack of effort on the part of the individual, is very strongly associated with views about redistribution. As is the case with much of the cross-national literature discussed further below, they also conclude that people's underlying core values are of critical importance when it comes to understanding attitudes to these issues.

Several other studies also highlight the importance of broader social values in framing social attitudes (Listhaug and Aalberg, 1999; Davidov, Schmidt, and Schwartz, 2008; Hunt, 2004; Vicario, Liddle and Luzzo, 2005; Sides and Citrin, 2007; Thorisdottir, Jost, Liviatan and Shrout, 2007; Biancotti and D'Alessio, 2008; Kaltenthaler, Ceccoli and Gelleny, 2008). The established argument is that values are more deeply held and stable within people and are less likely to show rapid changes across contexts and time, whereas attitudes are more susceptible to change.

Methodology

Introduction

The main aim of this section is to discuss the hypotheses and variables, investigation approach and justification of specific methods, role of the researcher in gathering data, criteria and strategies used when selecting participants and description of the systems used in collecting and storing information, demonstrate the methods step by step for performing the study in detail, description of the statistical tools and methods applied to analyse the information and measures to increase the validity of the study and finally a summary of the key points.

When administering the survey, there were three versions of the same: in Spanish, Italian and English. This consideration was made to facilitate the penetration rate of the survey by presenting the same in a language in which the respondents would find themselves most comfortable with. The original version was in English and translated into Spanish then later Italian. The author solicited the help of students studying languages, translation and interpretation from the languages School of Universitat Jaume I to assist with the conversion of the document to Spanish and Italian. This provided the impetus to investigate the main hypotheses of the paper according to the different languages spoken by the respondent. Care was taken to make the survey as short as possible without losing its objectivity. It would be interesting to observe the dynamics of fairness and equality according to the languages spoken by the respondents.

The data is analysed according to the main themes of the paper, that is:

- understand the participants' understanding of and how they relate equality and fairness
- pinpoint the drivers of equality and fairness
- to investigate how participants rank achieving equality in relation to other desirable social outcomes
- To explore participants' aspirations about equality and fairness both for themselves and for the broader society

Description of the data

As said above, the sample was divided into three groups according to the language of preference of the respondent. Much care was taken to avoid some of the common errors that come with surveys. The concepts and ideas under investigation were related, ensuring that the ideas being measured by the researcher and the concept implied in the survey were closely related. In the preliminary stages, draft copies were sent to different individuals and positive feedback was received regarding the appropriateness and objectivity of the survey. Later, the survey was revised severally before being sent to the respondents. All questions were mandatory; thus, there was no instance of non-response.

Care was taken in processing of the data using the appropriate means to eliminate any instances of processing error. The measurement of the data used was a 4-point Likert scale,

where appropriate. It is the most common way of measuring qualitative data, and it makes it easier to use quantitative methods in the analysis.

The channel used to administer the survey was through electronic means because a substantial number of the potential sample had access to a computer or smartphone. Other methods were not feasible because it might be an expensive undertaking. Sampling was the best choice because it is an affordable way of collecting information from the whole population. The sample, in this case, were Erasmus students from different academic disciplines and social backgrounds.

Collection, measurement and storage of the data

The data was collected using Google forms. It was automatically saved to an excel file by the software. The survey was designed using examples from different national surveys, that is:

- BSA (British Social Attitudes survey)
- SSA (Scottish Social Attitudes survey)
- NILT (Northern Ireland Life and Times survey)
- ESS (European Social Survey)
- ISSP (International Social Survey Programme)
- The Citizenship Survey

The survey was done online, in Spain for 4 months. The rating scale varied from strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree.

The survey consisted of 2 multiple choice questions and 18 questions that the respondents had to answer with a 4-point Likert scale. The reason behind using a four-point Likert scale is that the respondent's opinion is essential, it is the best for recording opinion, and it is even numbered. The main downside of this approach is that it forces opinions and it can distort the results. The aim was to conduct the survey with at least 200 Erasmus students in Spain for the year 2019. All students were given ample time to respond to the survey, and 171 students replied. All the survey questions were fully completed and were included in the analysis. The data was automatically fed into Google spreadsheets and could be downloaded if need be. For the analysis using Gretl, an offline copy of the data is useful.

Validity and reliability

As said above, the survey questions were adopted and modified from the national surveys listed in the previous section. The survey thus has a high degree of validity because it based on already existing national surveys that capture the same phenomena on a greater scale. The same national surveys also use similar Likert scales to capture respondents' opinion. The same technique is used in this paper, and thus gives it a high degree of reliability.

Estimation and inference of the model

The model used is non-linear in the parameters, and therefore, OLS could not be used to estimate the model. The R^2 and $\bar{R}^2$ are invalid for nonlinear regression models because the relationship between the variables is non-linear. The only valid measurement of fit is to

compare the maximised loglikelihood of the model with all the regressors to the likelihood of the model with no regressors (null model).

The options in multinomial and conditional logit models have no order or arrangement. That is not to say that the questions cannot be ordered in a specific way, as used in the survey. The Likert scale and ranks that were used made the use of logit and probit models suitable for the analysis and interpretation of the data. Some questions involved choosing between options. Thus, numerical values were assigned to the outcomes. The numerical values were ordinal and are used to show the ranking of the outcomes. The distance between the numerical values is not significant.

As said before, the linear regression model cannot be used because the model will assume that the Y variables to have numerical significance, which is not the case. The parameters were obtained by maximising the loglikelihood function. The model used was ordered logit, which assumes that the error term has a logistic distribution with robust errors.

Since the dependent variable had four categories on the Likert-scale, the value of each category was meaningful sequential order where the next was 'higher' than the next, it was logical to use ordinal logit. It is an ordered outcome dependent variable.

Model specification

The following is the equation for the ordered logit model, where y* is a latent variable and is unobservable. We only know when it crosses the threshold.

$$y_i^* = x_i'\beta + u_i$$

Where y_i^* captures the degree of belief on how one thinks about the validity of inequality as an issue today on a 1-4 Likert scale. In this case, we have a latent continuous variable which will be formed into four groups with three thresholds. These are the cut off points between the four different categories.

$$y_i = j \text{ if } \alpha_{j-1} < y_i^* \le \alpha_j$$

In our case, the alphas will be the thresholds if the underlying latent variable falls between the two thresholds. In the case of the survey, if you are on the agree with the spectrum of the range, then you could be either in the strongly agree or if you pass the threshold you be in the agree and so on. With four categories, we have three thresholds.

The probability that respondent I would select an alternative j is:

$$p_{ij} = p(y_i = j) = p(\alpha_{j-1} < y_i^* \le \alpha_j) = F(\alpha_j - x_i'\beta) - F(\alpha_{j-1} - x_i'\beta)$$

Where F is the logistic cdf $F(z) = e^z/(1+e^z)$

The peculiar thing about ordered logit models is that it has j alternatives (four in this case), there will be a single set of coefficients with j-1 intercepts which is represented by the cut-off points. Since our model has four alternatives, there will be four sets of marginal effects that can be computed.

The interpretation of the coefficients involves the observation of the sign of the parameters which shows whether the latent variable y* increases with the regressor. In the results, I will use more likely or less likely to be in the categories.

Marginal effects for the ordered logit model

The marginal effects of an increase in a regressor x on the probability of selecting alternative j are

$$\frac{\partial p_{ij}}{\partial x_{ri}} = \{F'(\alpha_{J-1} - x_i'\beta) - F'(\alpha_j - x_i'\beta)\}\beta_r$$

The exciting thing is the marginal effects of each variable on the different alternatives should sum up to zero. The interpretation for the marginal effects is that each unit increase in the independent variable increases or decreases the probability of selecting alternative j by the marginal effect.

Parameter estimates

The ordered log-odds are the coefficients. The interpretation of the ordered logit coefficient is that for a unit increase in the x variable, the y variable level is expected to change by its respective regression coefficient in the ordered log-odds scale while the other variables in the model are held constant. Interpretation of the ordered logit estimates is not dependent on the ancillary parameters; the ancillary parameters are used to differentiate the adjacent levels of the response variable. However, since the ordered logit model estimates one equation over all levels of the dependent variable, a concern is whether our one-equation model is valid, or a more flexible model is required.

Results

Is inequality a valid issue?

In this section, all the data is aggregated into one master dataset. In the figure below, the belief of inequality as a valid issue for all the subjects is summarised in the boxplot below, categorised first by gender, then by age group. The main aim of this section is to capture if participants understand inequality as a valid issue

Distribution of inequality_belief by Gender
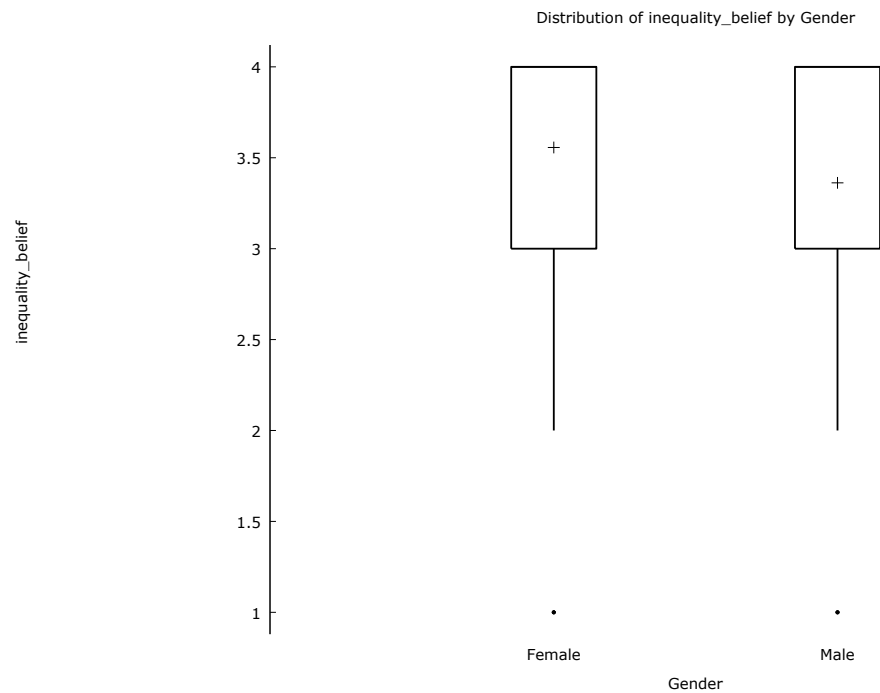
As seen above, similar patterns emerge from the previous analysis in the previous sections. Both the male and female respondents believe inequality is a valid issue, but there in the female category, there is a higher mean than in the male. Nevertheless, the difference is quite minute but noticeable. Since the boxplots overlap, we can conclude that with 95% confidence, the actual medians do not differ.

As expected, for both categories, the data is negatively skewed and therefore, does not follow a normal distribution. The Jarque-Bera test was 98.6132 with a p-value of 3.85852e-022.
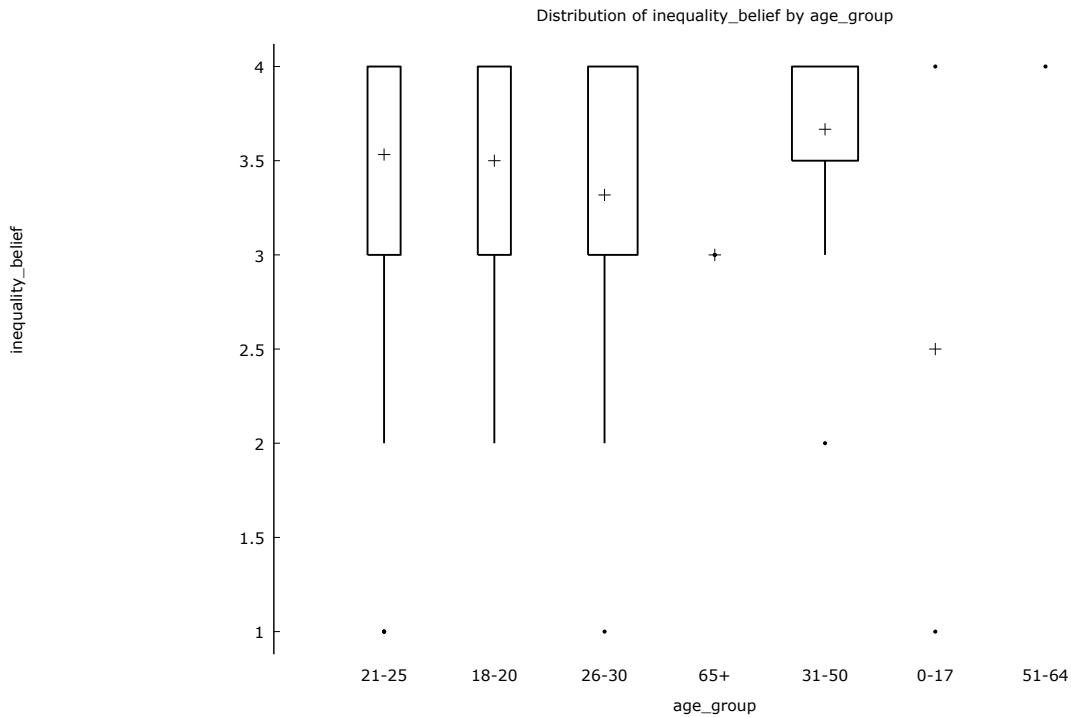
The following shows the box plot between **inequality_belief** and **age_group**. For all categories, the distribution is negatively skewed. The interquartile range for the first three categories is slightly similar. Some boxplots for the other categories were unavailable due to small data points.

Below are the summary statistics for the pooled data:

```
Summary statistics, using the observations 1 - 173
for the variable 'inequality_belief' (173 valid observations)

    Mean                      3.4913
    Median                    4.0000
    Minimum                   1.0000
    Maximum                   4.0000
    Standard deviation        0.76719
    C.V.                      0.21974
    Skewness                 -1.5591
    Ex. kurtosis              1.9893
    5% percentile             2.0000
    95% percentile            4.0000
    Interquartile range       1.0000
    Missing obs.                   0
```

The mean is quite high and close to the 95% percentile. On average, the mean was 3.4913, meaning most of the respondents think that inequality is a valid issue.

General attitudes to inequality

In this section, an ordered logit model using 173 observations with the dependent variable being **inequality_beilef** with robust standard errors. The summarised results are in the table below:

	Coefficient	Odds ratio	Std. error	P-value
unfair_protect_laws	0.272120	1.3127	0.197166	0.1675
laws_guarantee_fairness	0.996369	2.7084	0.219734	5.78e-06 ***
laws_expensive	−0.0851788	0.9183	0.199712	0.6697

According to the analysis above, the exponent of the coefficient for the predictor **laws_guarantee_fairness** is 2.7084 with a p-value of < 0.0001. Setting α=0.01, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the regression coefficient for **inequality_belief** is statistically significant and different from zero holding the other variables constant.

The odds ratios are interpreted by exponentiating the ordered logit coefficients. Ordered logit models estimate a single equation over the levels of the dependent variable.

unfair_protect_laws- for one unit increase in **unfair_protect_laws,** the odds of strongly agree **inequality_beilef** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree categories are 1.31 times higher, holding all the other variables in the model constant.

laws_guarantee_fairness for one unit increase in **laws_guarantee_fairness,** the odds of strongly agree **inequality_beilef** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree categories are 2.7 times higher, holding all the other variables in the model constant.

Below is an additional analysis on a different question investigating the general support for the principles of equality and fairness in general. It focusses on what people think that the EU should do concerning achieving fairness and equality. The results are displayed below:

	coefficient	Odds ratio	p-value
DEU_focus_1	1.65007	5.2073	0.1025
DEU_focus_2	2.01661	7.5128	0.0469 **
DEU_focus_3	1.80465	6.0778	0.0824 *
DEU_focus_4	1.92474	6.8534	0.0647 *
cut1	−1.62484		0.0882 *
cut2	−0.473465		0.6206
cut3	1.29506		0.1877

DEU_focus_1: This is the ordered log-odds estimate for one unit increase in **DEU_focus_1** rank on the expected **inequality_belief** level given the other variables are held constant in the model. For a unit increase in **DEU_focus_1,** the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree categories are

5.2073 times higher all other factors remaining constant. With α=0.10, we fail to reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is not statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

DEU_focus_2: This is the ordered log-odds estimate for one unit increase in **DEU_focus_2** rank on the expected **inequality_belief** level given the other variables are held constant in the model. For a unit increase in **DEU_focus_2,** the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree categories are 7.5128 times higher, all other factors remaining constant. With α=0.05, we reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

DEU_focus_3: This is the ordered log-odds estimate for one unit increase in **DEU_focus_3** rank on the expected **inequality_belief** level given the other variables are held constant in the model. For a unit increase in **DEU_focus_3,** the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree categories are 6.0778 times higher all other factors remaining constant. With α=0.10, we reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

DEU_focus_4: This is the ordered log-odds estimate for one unit increase in **DEU_focus_4** rank on the expected **inequality_belief** level given the other variables are held constant in the model. For a unit increase in **DEU_focus_4,** the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree categories are 6.8534 times higher all other factors remaining constant. With α=0.10, we reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

Process vs Outcome

This section further investigates the support for the principles of fairness and equality, specifically support for equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. The regression is run twice for each variable. The results are displayed below:

	Coefficient	Odds ratio	p-value
opportunity	0.535252	1.7079	0.0046 ***
outcome	−1.03520	0.3552	0.0020 ***

Opportunity: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **opportunity** to **outcome** on **inequality_belief,** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **opportunity**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 1.7079 times higher than for **outcome**, given the other variables are held constant. With α=0.01, we reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

Perceptions of whether society is fair

In this section, the respondents are asked to rank their perception on whether the EU is a fair society. Regression analysis is run on the data against their belief in inequality as a valid issue. The results are summarised below:

	coefficient	Odds ratio	p-value
eu_fairness	0.281753	1.3255	0.0923 *

eu_fairness: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **eu_fairness** on **inequality_belief** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **eu_fairness**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 1.3255 times higher, given the other variables are held constant. With α=0.10, we reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

Attitudes to social mobility/life opportunities

This aspect of equality adds to the perspective beyond the process vs outcome focussed questions above. The results are shown below:

	Coefficient	Odds ratio	p-value
Getting_ahead_in_life	−0.132632	0.8758	0.4586
wealthy_family	0.183433	1.2013	0.3764
connections	−0.130784	0.8774	0.4912

Getting_ahead_in_life: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **getting_ahead_in_life** on **inequality_belief,** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **getting_ahead_in_life**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 0.8758 times higher, given the other variables are held constant. With α=0.10, we fail to reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is not statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

wealthy_family: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **wealthy_family** on **inequality_belief,** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **wealthy_family**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 1.2013 times higher, given the other variables are held constant. With α=0.10, we fail to reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is not statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

Connections: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **connections** on **inequality_belief,** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **connections**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 0.8774 times higher, given the other variables are held constant. With α=0.10, we fail to reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is not statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

Attitudes to fairness and equality in specific settings

These questions are tailored to test the limits of the support for fairness and equality in different contexts, that is health, education and employment. The results of the regression are shown below:

	Coefficient	Odds ratio	p-value
Fairness_employment	−0.204900	0.8147	0.6158
health_context	−0.0512539	0.9500	0.7709
edu_context1	0.184837	0.8312	0.2358
edu_context2	0.178535	0.8365	0.3311

fairness_employment: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **fairness_employment** on **inequality_belief,** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **fairness_employment**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 0.8147 times higher, given the other variables are held constant.

health_context: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **health_context** on **inequality_belief,** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **health_context**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 0.9500 times higher, given the other variables are held constant.

edu_context1: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **edu_context1** on **inequality_belief** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **edu_context1**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 0.8312 times higher, given the other variables are held constant.

edu_context2: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **edu_context2** on **inequality_belief** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **edu_context2**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 0.8365 times higher, given the other variables are held constant.

With α=0.10, we fail to reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficients above are not statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

Welfare system

On the aspect of equality in public goods and services, this part focusses on the extent of income inequality. Questions that discussed the issue on the welfare system is used in order to create a situation that applies to everyone. Below are the results from the regression:

	Coefficient	Odds ratio	p-value
Fair_services	−0.00429873	0.9957	0.9772
fair_taxes	0.548537	1.7308	0.0068 ***

Fair_services: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **Fair_services** on **inequality_belief,** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **Fair_services**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 0.9957 times higher, given the other variables are held constant. With α=0.10, we fail to reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is not statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

Fair_taxes: This is the proportional odds ratio of comparing **Fair_taxes** on **inequality_belief,** given the other variables in the model are held constant. For one unit increase in **Fair_taxes**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 1.7308 times higher, given the other variables are held constant. With α=0.01, we reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above is statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

Drivers of attitudes

The questions in this section aim to identify the general drivers of attitudes to equality according to the following criterion:

Personality traits

This part touched on the respondent's opinion on whether the government should redistribute wealth to those who are well off. The results of the regression are shown below:

	Coefficient	Odds ratio	p-value
Redistribution_wealth	0.310853	1.3646	0.0429 **

The proportional odds ratio of comparing **Redistribution_wealth** on **inequality_belief** given the other variables in the model are held constant is calculated by exponentiating the coefficient. For one unit increase in **Redistribution_wealth**, the odds of strongly agree **inequality_belief** versus the combined agree, disagree and strongly disagree are 1.3646 times higher, given the other variables are held constant. With α=0.05, we reject the null and conclude that the regression coefficient above has been found to be statistically significant from zero in estimating the model above.

Sociodemographic factors

The sociodemographic factors in this survey were age, gender, personal income, family income and political views. The results of the regression are shown below:

	Coefficient	Odds ratio	p-value
female	0.535021	1.7075	0.1371
fam_income	−0.341413	0.7108	0.2408
own_income	0.108990	1.1151	0.6103
political_view	−1.02500	0.3588	0.0003***
a1	−0.478505	0.6197	0.9062
a2	2.13361	8.4453	1.25e-05***
a3	2.32067	10.1825	3.76e-07***
a4	1.53643	4.6480	0.0107**
a5	3.72305	41.3904	0.0039***
a6	13.4474	692040.6669	7.72e-032***

From the table above, gender, personal income and family income are not statistically different from 0 and therefore do not have a significant impact in the model above at all levels of α. On the other hand, the coefficients for political view and age are statistically significant from 0 at $\alpha=0.05$ in estimating the model above.

Main findings and conclusions

Understandings of fairness

According to the analysis above, some key findings emerged. Many of the respondents acknowledged that inequality is a valid issue. One of the aims of this paper is to discuss the respondents understanding of the abstract term of unfairness and equality, and it is hard to come to a single definition. Equality is a concept that cannot be defined unless it is put into context because fairness is a term that has broad definitions and understandings depending on the context that it is being used. This gives rise to equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. In some cases, respondents wanted everyone to be treated the same, whereas in other cases, they preferred that some people should be given extra help to be able to reduce inequality in society. The second treatment is that people treated according to their needs.

In this context, it is apparent that different people have different values, and thus what might be fair to one might not be fair to the other person. To that end, there are two ways one can conceptualize fairness: one is to treat everyone the same, but for that to be possible, one must factor in and accommodate the differences.

Understanding of equality

What stood out here was how equality differed from fairness when it was proxied as equality of opportunity. It referred to equal chances, rights, access. This was interesting because the term is usually mentioned in debates. It is actively used nowadays because of similar legislation and the language that is used to disseminate it among the masses.

We can see that with most of the respondents, it can be said that a majority of the respondents were for the idea that even though opportunity should be available to everyone, it does not imply that everyone should achieve the same thing. The reasoning is that people should take personal undertaking in order to make something out of them.

It is also apparent that the concepts of fairness and equality are sometimes used interchangeably, and there are different levels of understanding of these concepts. It can be understood at a personal level, community, and equality is something that can be implemented at a national level using appropriate policies.

Attitudes towards fairness and equality

The degree to which fairness and inequality present in the society depend on the context to which is being applied to. A lot of the respondents felt that the laws were necessary to guarantee fairness in society. This is because laws are necessary to guarantee that we live in a fair society, and it is expected that legislators will put forward favourable policies and reduce inequality in the European Union. There was much influence from the context, and this inevitably shaped the respondents' attitudes towards fairness and equality. Several exogenous drivers emerged as having some effect on the attitudes. In this section, we will investigate the attitudes and how they are shaped.

What is the level of fairness and equality in the EU?

The respondents acknowledged that inequality is a valid issue in the EU, but it is hard to conclude if this is true because they might be speaking from their perspective. Also, the presence or absence of fairness is dependent on the context too. At the same time, it can be

said that the EU is fair if one put it side to side with other countries in the world. In this sense, perceptions of fairness were in the context of standards of living, education, health etc.

Moreover, the perception of whether the EU is fair might be compared to some point back in time. It is not ideal, but it is better than before. In this case, fairness was understood to be tolerant and more accommodating towards other people. Insights into the perceptions of fairness in specific settings (social mobility) did not have a significant effect.

Unfairness in employment also came up rise where people do not get jobs based on specific characteristics, such as age or gender, even though they have the necessary skills. The overarching concern was that an individual's characteristics, for example, sexual orientation or disability, should have no bearing on their ability to get a job.

Another aspect of the unfair treatment of people is about healthcare and benefits system. From our analysis, the health and education systems in the EU were fair because there was no significant relationship between inequality and fairness in the education and health context. One probable reason is that the standards of education and health are quite high and almost at the same level, and everyone can access them. Also, they are affordable.

Some of the other respondents thought that the EU was unfair in the way it treats minority groups either better or worse compared to others. There is much support in terms of accommodating people's needs in order to achieve a fair society.

It is expected that the way people view fairness is determined by a mix of endogenous and exogenous factors. While it might be hard to figure out how these factors work, it is possible to determine several factors that have a significant effect. Personal attributes, such as age and political views, have a significant impact. In this experiment, gender did not have a significant impact, even though most of the respondents were female. Inequality is a significant issue among both males and females.

Though inequality was considered a valid issue, there were subtle differences in the view of the concept.

Looking into the differences that came up for the need for equal opportunities and equal outcomes. Equal opportunities for everyone are desirable, whereas equal outcomes are not desirable because people think that everyone's needs should be considered. After all, everyone is not the same. Some people cannot get ahead in life due to specific reasons, but with a little help, they can get there. Everyone must have an opportunity to achieve their full potential. The main message was that everyone, regardless of individual characteristics, should be given the same opportunities. Some people might need more help than others in order to take advantage of these opportunities. However, it may not result in people achieving the same outcomes. Respondents did not make a distinction between individual or group outcomes. It is interesting to note here that participants' views present a potential challenge to the notion of tackling inequality of outcome – as either impossible or undesirable.

The most significant aspect of the drivers of attitudes towards fairness was personality traits and sociodemographic factors such as age and political ideology. Other characteristics, such as income did not have a significant impact as a driver of attitudes towards fairness.

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Appendix

SURVEY QUESTIONS DISCUSSION

This part aims to design a list of questions that address the following themes:

- Attitudes towards fairness and equality (general)
- Attitudes towards fairness and equality (specific)
- Drivers of fairness and equality
- How far are we willing to tolerate inequality?

Some of these questions are new or are based on or taken from the following surveys:

- The Citizenship Survey
- ESS (European Social Survey)
- ISSP (International Social Survey Programme)

These questions are following the themes highlighted above and might not be in the appropriate order for a survey questionnaire. It is expected that the general questions come before the specific questions, and they will be administered using google forms.

Main aims and objectives

This study aims to explore participants' understanding of and views on equality and fairness. The key objectives are:

• To explore participants' understanding of the terms fairness and (in)equalities.

 • To explore how participants understand how fairness and (in)equality relate

• To explore what factors drive participants' attitudes to fairness and equality including Social knowledge, Values, Social context and Life experience

• To explore how participants rank achieving equality in relation to other desirable social outcomes

 • To explore participants' aspirations in relation to equality and fairness both for themselves and for the broader society

• To explore the language that participants use in relation to equality and fairness in order to frame the appropriate survey questions

General notes on the survey questions

The questions are categorized into four broad sections:

 • General attitudes to fairness and/or (in)equality

• Attitudes to fairness and/or (in)equality in specific settings

• Drivers of attitudes to fairness and (in)equality

Each question lists the source underneath, as either NEW or taken from/based on one of the following surveys:

• BSA (British Social Attitudes survey)

• SSA (Scottish Social Attitudes survey)

• NILT (Northern Ireland Life and Times survey)

• ESS (European Social Survey)

• ISSP (International Social Survey Programme – which in Britain is run on BSA)

• The Citizenship Survey

Each question has an 'item count' which shows the amount of space each of these questions would take up in the survey – for instance, questions which ask people how strongly they agree or disagree with each of four statements would be counted as four items. In practice, a 'standard' module on BSA (excluding all background and demographic questions) consists of 40 items. This comprises around 10 minutes of survey questions to be completed by the respondent.

These questions are following the themes highlighted above and might not be in the appropriate order for a survey questionnaire. It is expected that the broad questions come before the specific questions. The final decision on the overall balance of the content will be a compromise between the length of the survey and recommendations on the appropriateness of the same from experts in the field.

Chapter 1: Attitudes towards fairness and inequality

Key themes the questions included here are intended to explore include:

- **Support of the general principles of fairness and equality**
  The focus will be on the widespread support of public policy to attain fairness and equality. In some cases, people want equality and fairness but are against using public policy to achieve it, due to low confidence in the government, or they think it is not the government's responsibility.
- **Importance of achieving fairness and equality**
  Some people think equality and fairness are good, but at the same time, they feel like the government should turn its attention to more important things.
- **Support for process vs outcome**
  Some might need some intervention to attain an equal society in the end. This is particularly important, especially when it comes to an understanding of how people perceive equality and fairness.
- **Views on whether society is fair**
- **Attitudes towards the social/work nomad lifestyle.**

What should 'types' or understandings of equality the questions cover?

According to the literature, differences in support for equality of process and equality of outcome is significant in justifying why some people support equality/fairness but have a distaste for some measures that are formulated to achieve them, and this aspect is captured in the survey questions.

What is the geographic level is desirable to explore fairness?

• Due to the diversity of the respondents, the appropriate point of reference for framing questions about perceptions of inequality in society was at the supranational level (Europe).

Support for principles of fairness/equality in general

In many European countries, there are laws to safeguard diverse groups in society by ensuring they are treated equally. How much do you agree or disagree that laws like this:

 a) protect some groups at the expense of others?

b) are necessary to guarantee that everyone is treated in a fair way?

 c) expensive to enforce?

ITEMS: 4

SOURCE: New

Here are some different things people have said governments might try and achieve. Which, if any, do you think the EU should try and achieve?

A. Equal treatment, regardless of their background

B. Equal opportunities for everyone

C. Reduce the gap in living standards and quality of life

D. Enforcement of equal rights

E. None of these

ITEMS: 5

SOURCE: New

Process versus outcome equality (general)

6. Which of the statements below comes closest to your own view?

Equal treatment for everyone, even if it at the expense of the quality of life and living standards(process);

OR

Some people in society should be given extra help to improve their living standards and reduce the gap in the quality of life among people (outcome).

ITEMS: 1

SOURCE: New

Perceptions of whether society is fair

How much would you agree or disagree that Europe is a society where everyone is treated fairly?

ITEMS: 1

SOURCE: New (based on a NILT question)

Social mobility and life opportunities…(4 point Likert scale)

how important you think it is for getting ahead in life

How important is coming from a wealthy family?

How important is knowing the right people?

ITEMS: 3

SOURCE: BSA ISSP

Chapter 2 – Attitudes to fairness and equality in specific settings

Introduction

These questions are intended to investigate further the limits of people's support for fairness/equality.

The following are some of the 'contexts' that will be covered:

• Employment

• Health

• Goods and services

The intuition behind focussing on contexts was to gravitate away from the type of questions asked in discrimination studies, where a lot of people are asked their take on unfair treatment in relation to other groups. Instead, the focus was on trying to determine the support for the general principles that might be adopted to reduce inequality and avoid the influence of one's personal views about specific groups. Hypothetically, the sample could be split randomly in such a way that the respondents take a specific route to establish the degree of change in support when specific examples are used. The intuition is not to focus on the views on inequality but define the gap in support among the different groups using certain examples. However, due to the rigidness of the survey and the length, this would be something worth pursuing in a future survey.

Support for principle of equality of outcome in different contexts:

How much would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1. It doesn't matter if some groups of people are less likely to run big companies, as long as anyone with the right skills can apply for these jobs
2. It doesn't matter if some groups of people are likely to die at a younger age than others, as long as everyone is entitled to free health care when they need it

ITEMS: 3

SOURCE: New

Chapter 3: Support for specific measures to achieve equality of outcome in different contexts

This question is framed in such a way that the respondents directly address fairness in context.

Some groups of people tend to have worse health than others. Which do you think is the fairest way for the National Health System to deliver services?

There should be some special services for people who tend to have worse health

OR

The same services should be available to everyone

ITEMS: 1

SOURCE: New

Welfare system

The government raises money through taxation to pay for benefits and services like education and health. How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

a) It's only right that taxes paid by the majority help support those in need
b) It's not right that people benefit from services that they haven't helped to pay for

ITEMS: 2

SOURCE: BSA

NOTES: This question was part of a larger set of questions that were used in analysis of attitudes to poverty in order to identify people's altruistic approach to social welfare, and can also be useful in measuring core values.

Chapter 4 – Drivers of attitudes

Introduction

The questions in this section aim to identify the general drivers of attitudes to equality according to the following criterion:

- Personality traits
- Socio-demographic factors

Personality traits

The Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off

ITEMS: 1

SOURCE: Core BSA/SSA

4 point Likert scale (Strongly disagree-strongly agree)

Socio-demographic factors

The following will need to be collected in any survey:

• Age

• Sex

• Educational attainment

 • Socio-economic and employment status

• Household income

• Religion

Total item count for all questions included in this document: 26

Total questions: 11